

Abroad

LAGOS

SIGNS OF DISINTEGRATION

The Federation of Nigeria, largest of the new African nations (pop. 36 million) and well endowed with physical resources, began independent life on Oct. 1, 1960 under the glow of universally optimistic forecasts. The bright promise has rapidly darkened. Many observers believe the country is being held together today only because of its luck in possessing one fairly wise and honest man—Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa—to serve as Prime Minister. In the general opinion, all the other politicians have already proved themselves corrupt and self-seeking. Politics has become more and more tribal. The disintegrative tendency has forced agreement to split up one of the three constituent regions of the Federation. The government has refused to accept last year's census as valid, and no one knows how to conduct a new one, required for the elections due this year. Chief Awolowo, head of the Action Group and leader of the western state (the one slated for splitting) is currently standing a fantastic trial for treason. The grandiose 1962-68 economic plan has failed to get off the ground. Agents trained by Iron Curtain instructors in Ghana are engaged in sabotage and arson, as well as political intrigue. The only major project to show notable advance is the expanding University of Nigeria at Nsukka; but many believe its influence will be a further contribution to instability.

ZURICH

NEWS MANAGEMENT

Mr. Rohan Rivett, director of the International Press Institute, in a year-end report, has declared 1962 "a grim year for believers in freedom of the press. In many countries, editors and publishers striving to tell the truth to their communities have been silenced or dispossessed." The United States does not escape comment: "The Cuban crisis produced suggestions of a major breach in the traditional independence of the American press." The new African states are named as prime offenders: "Under one pretext or another the press has either been bullied into a narrowly subservient government line, or emasculated of all crucial comment throughout most of North Africa and West Africa." Indonesia, however, heads the list: "No one in Asia or Africa has moved further toward totalitarianism than Pres. Sukarno in Indonesia. As a final gesture, Ministers have become the controlling majority of the board of the news agency which dominates distribution of all domestic and foreign news to the Indonesian people." As if to supply a gloss to Mr. Rivett's report, Sukarno has recently laid down the line for the now official news agency, Antara. Indonesian journalists, he said, should get over their naive notion that reporting should be objective. "No revolution is objective," and the journalists' task is to give "news that favors and does credit to the revolution."

ADEN

COFFIN NAILS

A grim little weapon has been added to the modern arsenal for irregular warfare, one front of which is now active throughout much of the south Arabian peninsula. A number of persons in Yemen, Aden and the southern sheikdoms have been badly injured, in some cases killed, by explosive cigarettes—a stepped-up version of the old gag type. They are indistinguishable, except by a slight difference in weight, from ordinary cigarettes, and are included in cigarette packets in a ratio of about one in four. They are apparently being distributed by the Egyptian expeditionary force, partly by dropping the packets from planes over the Yemeni areas under royalist control.

LEICESTER

FLUORIDE NO

The City Council here continued the general trend in Britain by voting down (40-15) a proposal to add fluoride to the municipal water supply. The health committee had concluded: "Its benefits are beyond doubt and its safety has been established." This was not disputed. The decision was based on the principle summed up by Council member Guy Collis: "Compulsory dosing with fluoride would be a gross infringement on the individual's right of choice."



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Right Coffin, Wrong Body

WEST BERLIN

SUICIDE OFFICE

According to the World Health Organization, this city has an annual suicide rate of 33.9 per 100,000 inhabitants—the highest in the world. Although the most obvious explanation would seem to be its perilous Cold War position, this is refuted by the fact that even in the 1920s the Berlin rate was close to the highest. In a partly successful attempt to lower the rate, a 24-hour office has been opened at which two calm women are always prepared "to help without asking about race, color, political or religious views all men [and women—callers are about evenly divided between the sexes] who are lonely, despairing, or in deep spiritual need." It has been found that loneliness and love rank considerably above money as suicidal motives.

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